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## Not Fiddling Around

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# NOT FIDDLING AROUND

*Alumnus Ryan Joseph Finds a Home in Country*

**A**lumnus Ryan Joseph has been performing since he was a toddler, and there is a good chance you have heard him even if you don't know his name. A sought-after fiddle player, Joseph can be heard singing and playing on hundreds of tracks on country music recordings.

He got his start with a family polka band, and soon expanded his repertoire. When only 10 years old he played for renowned fiddler Mark O'Connor, and at the age of 11 he appeared on the *Live with Regis and Kathy Lee* television program.

"A little timid and soft spoken," is how Rachel Stegeman, adjunct professor of violin, remembers Joseph in his first year at the Music School, but his positive outlook and eagerness to become a better violinist quickly earned her respect. Her spouse, Charles Stegeman, the chair of strings and an associate professor of violin, taught Joseph for five years. "His God-given gift was evident early on, but here he honed his technique dramatically, learning very quickly," Charles Stegeman said.

Joseph credits his time at Duquesne for making him a well-rounded musician. "My instructors not only taught me the techniques required to be a professional musician, they also set an example for the business sense you must have when being a full-time musician," he said.

Even before graduating from the Mary Pappert School of Music in 2006 with a Bachelor of Science in Music Education, Joseph was experiencing success. His family's polka band had been nominated for a Grammy, and

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he was sharing the stage with some of country music's big names, opening shows for, or accompanying, the likes of Bill Anderson, Brooks and Dunn, Wynonna Judd, Little Big Town, Martina McBride, Jo Dee Messina, John Michael Montgomery, Montgomery Gentry, Jimmy C. Newman, Boots Randolph, Blake Shelton, Phil Vassar, Steve Wariner, and many others.

## ***"He had a dream and he pursued it."***

Since moving to Nashville in May 2007 Joseph has played and sung with country music stars Helen Cornelius, Vince Gill, Amy Grant, Jan Howard, Hal Ketchum and Jeannie Seely. He has also performed on the *Academy of Country Music Awards* and *Grand Ole Opry* television broadcasts as well as on *Good Morning America* and the *Tonight Show* with Jay Leno.

Fortunately, Joseph did not have to choose a single career pursuit; he's currently performing, teaching and recording. "He had a dream and he pursued it," Charles Stegeman said, adding that right now Joseph is "at a place where he can do it all. He has the best of all worlds."

Joseph is the concertmaster of the orchestra at Belmont University in Nashville, where he also serves as an adjunct faculty member. In addition to launching his solo career and working as a studio musician, he has been touring with Jamie O'Neal and Mercury Recording artist Laura Bell Bundy.

About her former student who once performed Jimmy Hendrix's Purple Haze with his string quartet in her living room, Rachel Stegeman said, "I couldn't be happier for him. I am his fan on Facebook." ●

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## **RACHEL STEGEMAN**

*Adjunct Professor of Violin*

In a number of ways, Ryan Joseph's career trajectory mirrors that of Rachel Stegeman, one of his teachers at the Mary Pappert School of Music.

Aside from being an adjunct professor of violin, Stegeman is an in-demand studio musician. She has recorded with pop groups and performed on over 1,000 commercial projects, including on soundtracks for television and films, playing everything from classical orchestral and chamber music to jazz, R&B and heavy metal.

Stegeman serves as the concertmaster of the Wheeling Symphony Orchestra and associate concertmaster of both the Pittsburgh Ballet Orchestra and the Pittsburgh Opera. She is also the principal violin of Hollywood Bowl Orchestra in Los Angeles.

She performs regularly at chamber music festivals, including the Sunflower Music Festival, Buzzard's Bay MusicFest and the St. Barth's Music Festival. She holds both bachelor's and master's degrees in music from Duquesne University. Her teachers include Luis Haza, William Steck, Robert Lipsett and Sidney Harth.



*Teaching the musical leaders of the 21st century*

## **CHARLES STEGEMAN**

*Associate Professor and Chair of Strings*

Canadian-born violinist Charles Stegeman is now in his third decade as a teacher. Former students of his hold music professorships around the country and have performed with renowned orchestras.

Stegeman made his recital debut at age 7 and debuted as soloist with the Banff Festival Orchestra at age 9 in Alberta, Canada. He was awarded a scholarship to the Curtis Institute of Music at the early age of 13 where he earned his bachelor's degree. His resumé also includes academic coursework at Haverford College and graduate study at the Juilliard School.

Stegeman is concertmaster of the Pittsburgh Opera, the Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre and the New West Symphony Orchestra in Thousand Oaks, Ca. In addition, he performs approximately 75 concerts each year in North America, Europe, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean as concertmaster, chamber musician, and soloist. He has founded several music festivals, including the Western Slope Music Festival (Crested Butte, Co.), the Sunflower Music Festival (Topeka, Kan.), Buzzards Bay Music Festival (Cape Cod, Mass.) and Music Fest Midwest (Kansas City, Kan.). He has also served as concertmaster at international festivals, such as the St. Bart's Music Festival in the French West Indies and the FEMUSC Festival in Brazil. He plays a 1776 Nicolo Gagliano violin. ●

